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Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as a joint submission on cooperative activities of the three secretariats.

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Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

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I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

A. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 58/243 of 23 December 2003, invited the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[1] to report to it at its fifty-ninth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

B. Outcome of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties

1. Summary

2. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held its ninth session in Milan, Italy, from 1 to 12 December 2003. The Conference resolved a number of outstanding issues on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol[2] and explored a wide range of options for limiting greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Framework Convention has reached near-universality, with 189 States having become parties and the Kyoto Protocol having been ratified by 124.

2. Outcome of the ninth session

3. The formal decisions adopted by the Conference, some of which are noted below, will strengthen the institutional framework of both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

4. The agreement on the modalities and procedures for afforestation and reforestation ("sinks") project activities under the clean development mechanism completed the Marrakesh Accords[3] by expanding the mechanism to the forestry sector. The mechanism allows industrialized countries (parties included in annex I to the Convention) to implement projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a developing country (parties not included in annex I to the Convention). The certified emission reduction units generated by such projects can be used by industrialized countries to help meet their emissions targets under the Kyoto Protocol. Clean development mechanism projects also help developing countries to achieve sustainable development and contribute to the ultimate objective of the Framework Convention. It is expected that the rules agreed upon by the Conference will provide incentives for local communities to engage in afforestation and reforestation activities, and will ensure quality projects that do not result in negative impacts for the host country.

5. Modalities for small-scale forestry projects will be further elaborated in the future. New emission reporting guidelines based on the good-practice guidance provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will provide a sound and reliable foundation for reporting the sequestration and emissions of carbon resulting from land-use changes and forestry. The initial reports of industrialized countries are due in 2005.

6. The Conference adopted decisions on the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Country Fund that have enabled the Global Environment Facility, as an entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism of the Convention, to mobilize the resources to make the funds operational. The decision on the Special Climate Change Fund has identified two initial eligible activities: adaptation and technology transfer and its associated capacity-building. Further discussions on this issue are to be held at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties. With regard to the Least Developed Country Fund, a decision adopted will make it possible to finance the implementation of national adaptation programmes of action in the least developed countries. The European Community and its member States, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland renewed an earlier pledge to contribute $US 40 million annually to developing countries through these funds, and other avenues.

7. The implementation of the Convention continues, with 108 of 148 developing countries having submitted their initial national communications. Several developing countries have also submitted their second national communications and others have begun work on them. Information provided by industrialized countries, summarized by the secretariat in its compilation and synthesis report, noted that the aggregate greenhouse gas emissions of industrialized countries in 2000 were below 1990 levels, largely because of the decrease in emissions from countries with economies in transition. Greenhouse gas projections provided by industrialized countries indicated that, in the absence of additional measures, the aggregate emissions of these countries, including emissions of countries with economies in transition, are expected to increase in the period 2000-2010. The Conference concluded that further action was needed by industrialized countries to implement policies and measures that would contribute to modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions, consistent with the objective of the Convention and the commitments of these countries, and strongly urged them to intensify their efforts to that end.

8. The high-level political debate held during the Conference took the form of three round-table discussions among ministers and other heads of delegations. The round-table discussions focused on a range of topics, such as adaptation, mitigation, sustainable development, technology and assessment of progress. At these discussions, many ministers emphasized that climate change remained the most important global challenge for humanity and that its adverse effects are already a reality in all parts of the world. It was recognized that implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures involves synergy and complementarity among economic growth, equity, poverty alleviation and environmental protection. The increasing demand for adaptation measures was noted, along with the need to improve knowledge about the vulnerability of societies and the means of mainstreaming adaptation measures into existing development planning. In this context, increasing the capacity of local communities was reiterated, and it was acknowledged that scarcity of resources hampers the capacity of countries to address climate change adequately.

9. Many ministers emphasized that the Kyoto Protocol represents a significant first step towards realizing the Convention's goal of stabilizing atmospheric levels, of greenhouse gases at safe levels, and called for its immediate entry into force. It was pointed out that the Protocol was already changing the way we think about climate, energy and investment.

10. Ministers discussed the question of how best to make use of existing technology while at the same time facilitating technology innovation, development and diffusion in the context of sustainable development. It was noted by many ministers that economic growth and climate change policies are compatible and if action were taken to introduce technologies, such as renewable energy and energy conservation, into the market, economic gains can be made. Implementing measures, such as energy-efficiency projects, introduction of renewable energy sources and development of new technologies, for example, hydrogen-related technologies and carbon capture and storage technologies, can help to decouple economic growth and the growth in emissions, in addition to achieving social and environmental benefits. The importance of adaptation technologies in areas such as agriculture, water, coastal zones and public health was highlighted. Intensified North-South and regional cooperation, for example, in technology research and cleaner production, was stressed.

11. The catalytic role of Governments in promoting research and development and of private sector investment was noted. So too, was choosing the best available technologies for the huge investments in electricity production that must be made over the coming two decades. The importance of institutional cooperation at the national level and the involvement of civil society was acknowledged.

12. The programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 was adopted. It includes an interim allocation to carry out activities relating to the Kyoto Protocol, which is to be added to the programme budget upon the entry force of the Protocol.

13. A number of side events, involving intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry, academics and indigenous peoples, presented ongoing projects and academic studies, including those on the global earth observation system and the future of international climate policy.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[2] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[3] See FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1.

II. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, on the implementation of the Convention

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/242 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of resolution, concerning the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.[1] The Assembly expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Cuba for hosting the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Havana, from 25 August to 5 September 2003.

2. The Assembly welcomed the decision of the Conference of the Parties, at its sixth session, to accept the Global Environment Facility as a financial mechanism of the Convention. It also welcomed the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility at its meeting held in Washington, D.C., from 14 to 16 May 2003, to establish a new operational programme on sustainable land management and, in that regard, urged the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, to consult with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, with a view to preparing and agreeing upon a memorandum of understanding, as mandated by the Conference of the Parties, for consideration and adoption by the Conference and the Council.

3. The sixth session of the Conference of the Parties was officially opened in Havana on 25 August 2003, and a senior United Nations official attended the opening ceremony and the high-level segment, in which 13 heads of States and Government and more than 100 ministers took part. The important decisions adopted by the Conference advance the effective and timely implementation of the Convention.

B. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 58/242

4. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention held its second session in Havana from 26 to 29 August 2003, during the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties.

1. Review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements, pursuant to article 22, paragraphs 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention

5. The Committee was established by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session, as a standing subsidiary body to assist it in its function of reviewing the implementation of the Convention. With regard to the review process, it is important to recall that the Conference, in decision 11/COP.1,[2] outlined the specific objectives of the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, and defined the format of reports on the implementation of the Convention to be submitted to it. In this regard, it was decided that, after the sixth

session of the Conference, the review should be conducted in accordance with the timetable outlined in paragraphs 13 to 15 of decision 11/COP.1, that it should continue to focus on specific thematic issues identified by parties, and that it should consider the strategic priority areas identified in the Bonn Declaration.[3]

6. At its second session, the Committee conducted an extensive assessment of the further steps to be taken in the implementation of the Convention and made several recommendations on major issues, such as resource mobilization, including coordination and partnership agreements, rehabilitation of degraded lands, promotion of private sector and economic opportunities in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions and countries, capacity-building, including in the area of participatory processes, legislative and institutional frameworks and promotion of synergies, monitoring and assessment, including the improvement of the reporting process, awareness-raising, information and communication. It also articulated the respective roles of the secretariat and of the Global Mechanism.

7. At its seventh session, currently scheduled to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 17 to 28 October 2005, the Conference of the Parties will review the terms of reference of the Committee, its operations and its schedule of meetings, with a view to making any necessary modification, including reconsideration of the need for and modalities of the Committee as a subsidiary body. The review will be based on such considerations as relevance, impact, effectiveness, appropriateness of format and cost-effectiveness. Parties were invited to submit their views on this question by 1 January 2005 and, with the aim of facilitating the review, the Executive Secretary was requested to prepare a report based on the views received and to submit it to the Conference at its seventh session.

8. Other important decisions were taken by the Committee on Science and Technology which held its sixth session in Havana, from 26 to 28 August 2003. The Committee reviewed its work and agreed on decisions to enhance its contribution to the implementation of the Convention in the areas of the roster of independent experts, survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies, traditional knowledge, benchmarks and indicators, early warning systems, land degradation assessment in dry lands and the millennium ecosystem assessment. The Committee also agreed on its programme of work, which will include a priority issue on an integrated approach to land degradation vulnerability and rehabilitation.

2. Collaboration with the Global Environment Facility

9. By resolution 58/242, the General Assembly welcomed the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility to establish a new operational programme on sustainable land management. Furthermore, the Assembly welcomed the decision of the Conference of the Parties to accept the Facility as a financial mechanism of the Convention, pursuant to article 21 of the Convention and, in that regard, urged the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, to consult with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Facility, with a view to preparing and agreeing upon a memorandum of understanding for consideration and adoption by the Conference and the Council.

10. The Executive Secretary and the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism have consulted on the draft memorandum, which was sent to the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility for consideration. At the session of the Council of the Facility held in Washington, D.C., in November 2003, the Chief Executive Officer

was requested to submit to it a draft memorandum for review and comment in sufficient time that its views may be reflected in the draft memorandum to be presented to the Conference at its seventh session, in 2005. At its meeting in May 2004, the Council of the Facility focused on coherence and implementation in regard to the allocation of resources for land degradation projects.

11. Since becoming a financial mechanism of the Convention, the Facility has invested itself in supporting the implementation of the Convention, in particular with regard to the capacity-building component of national reports. In this respect, a medium-sized project has been developed by the World Bank to support the preparation of the national reports from Africa to be presented to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its third session.

3. Consideration of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development relevant to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

12. In paragraph 7 (l) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[4] the Convention to Combat Desertification is acknowledged as one of the tools for poverty eradication. At its sixth session, the Conference of the Parties welcomed that recognition, underlined the importance of the implementation of the Convention for meeting the Millennium Development Goals and urged all development partners to make use of the Convention in their strategies to achieve them. Parties were also encouraged to ensure good linkages between the follow-up to the Summit, in particular the work being done by the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Convention.

13. In that regard, the secretariat of the Convention, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Environment Facility, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, organized on 30 April 2004, during the twelfth session of the Commission, a side-event on the interlinkages among drought, desertification and water. The event was co-chaired by Luc-Marie Gnacadja, Minister of Environment, Housing and Urban Development of Benin and Olav Kjorven, State Secretary of International Development of Norway. The discussion covered various issues, such as Convention synergies, drought management, governance, rural land use practices, the integration of drought mitigation into investment planning and science and technology for drought mitigation.

4. Synergies with other relevant Conventions, and organizations

14. By decision 12/COP.6,[5] the Conference of the Parties reviewed activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies. In that regard, it was noted that synergies with the Rio conventions had been strengthened through the work of the Joint Liaison Group. The Conference underlined the importance of the collaboration between those Conventions and the United Nations Forum on Forests in promoting activities in the low forest cover countries to combat desertification, land degradation and deforestation.

15. The secretariats of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (more commonly known as the Ramsar Convention)[6] have continued to hold

periodic consultations with a view to putting into operation their joint memorandum of understanding through collaborative ventures, in particular at the national and local levels. Finally, the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification has concluded a memorandum of understanding with the secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals in regard to joint activities.

5. Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention

16. The tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention to Combat Desertification was celebrated on 17 June 2004. On that occasion, the secretariat organized two major activities, on raising global awareness of desertification and at the same time marking the presence of this United Nations agency at its headquarters location in Bonn, Germany.

17. To mark the tenth anniversary, the secretariat also produced a 20-page commemorative publication highlighting the work of the Convention since its inception. Entitled *Preserving our Common Ground: UNCCD Ten Years On*, the publication encompasses a range of articles representing themes strategic to the Convention process. The main article, "Securing a global common good", exemplifies the Convention as a potential tool yet to be fully utilized to address acute social, economic and political issues linked to the effects of desertification and drought. Insight is also provided on organs vital to the Convention's efficacy, such as the Global Environment Facility and the Global Mechanism.

C. Action requested by the General Assembly

18. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 57/259, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report has been produced in response to that request.

19. As underlined by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Convention to Combat Desertification constitutes a major international instrument which can contribute to poverty eradication. Its timely and effective implementation would help in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, since most poverty and hunger is concentrated in rural, dry and degraded lands. The Assembly may wish to emphasize that aspect as we are fast approaching the first review of the progress made in that respect.

20. Desertification contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty, and can give rise to social, economic and political tensions that can cause conflicts. It is a serious obstacle to sustainable development. The Assembly may therefore reaffirm that aspect and invite all stakeholders, in particular the developed ones, to take concrete measures aimed at using the Convention as an instrument to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, in particular with regard to its environmental pillar.

21. The Convention has entered into its implementation phase. Despite access to the Global Environment Facility's resources, there is a need for more funding efforts as the needs in addressing land degradation remain huge. The Assembly may wish to call for more funding from various sources. It may also wish to call upon the forthcoming fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund to

increase substantially the level of resources allocated to the implementation of the Convention in the light of the demonstrated need.

22. The Assembly may further wish to reiterate its appeal to the parties to the Convention to pay their contributions to the core budget, which are due to be paid promptly every 1 January, and which continue to provide the resources for conference services.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] See ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1.

[3] See ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1, decision 8/COP.4.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[5] See ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1.

[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 996, No. 14583.

III. Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Introduction

1. In paragraph 15 of its resolution 58/212 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity[1] to continue reporting to it on ongoing work regarding the Convention, including its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.[2]

2. Since the most recent report of the Executive Secretary to the General Assembly (A/58/191), the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held in Kuala Lumpur from 9 to 20 and on 27 February 2004. The first meeting of the Conference serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was held at the same venue, from 23 to 27 February 2004.

3. The reports of the two meetings (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21 and UNEP/CBD/COP-MOP/1/15), together with lists of participants and pre-session documentation, have been made available to all Governments, and are available at the secretariat's web site, http://www.biodiv.org. Section B below provides an overview of the Conference and the Meeting, focusing on follow-up action to the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[3] Section C highlights a number of issues of direct relevance to the work of the Assembly.

4. As at 10 June 2004, there were 188 parties to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003. As at 10 June 2004, 100 countries had ratified the Protocol.

B. Overview of the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol

1. Outcome of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties

5. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties was attended by some 2,300 participants, representing some 162 Governments and 394 organizations, including United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, indigenous communities, academia and industry. A high-level ministerial segment adopted the Kuala Lumpur Ministerial Declaration.

6. At its first meeting since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Conference had the important task of translating the biodiversity-related commitments of the Summit into concrete measures. These commitments include the target of significantly reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, the negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, and the establishment of ecological networks and corridors.

7. In the Convention's Strategic Plan,[4] adopted at the sixth meeting, parties committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global regional and national levels, as a contribution to

poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth, an objective that was endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. At its seventh meeting, the Conference developed a framework to facilitate the assessment of progress made towards the achievement of the 2010 targets and the communication of that assessment, to promote coherence among the programmes of work of the Convention, within which national and regional targets might be set, and indicators identified. The framework covers seven focal areas: reducing the rate of loss of the components of biodiversity; promoting sustainable use of biodiversity; addressing the major threats to biodiversity; maintaining ecosystem integrity and the provision of goods and services from biodiversity in ecosystems in support of human well-being; protecting traditional knowledge, innovations and practices; ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources; and mobilizing financial and technical resources. For each of the focal areas, goals and subtargets are to be established, a set of indicators was established and others are to be identified. Within this flexible framework, the Conference invited parties and Governments to develop national and/or regional goals and targets, and, as appropriate, to incorporate them into relevant plans, programmes and initiatives, including national biodiversity strategies and action plans (decision VII/30).

8. The seventh meeting also further reinforced the shift, already evident at the fifth and sixth meetings held in 2000 and 2002, respectively, from policy development to implementation. The decisions on thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work set clear outcome-oriented targets and either established or called for the development and incorporation of indicators for measuring progress. The multi-year programme of work of the Conference up to 2010 focuses primarily on the evaluation of progress made in or in supporting implementation. At each of its meetings up to 2010, a central objective of the Conference will be to assess the state of progress made, including obstacles, in achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and the progress made towards the achievement of the 2010 target and relevant Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, the Conference of the Parties established an ad hoc open-ended working group on the review of the implementation of the Convention to consider the progress made in implementation and the Strategic Plan.

9. Emphasizing the role of the Convention as the key international instrument for the integration of biodiversity-related issues into the Millennium development agenda and for the achievement of its goals, the Conference, at its seventh meeting, sought to articulate and integrate in each of its work programmes the links between biodiversity, the Millennium Development Goals and poverty eradication.

10. The Conference decided that, when undertaking in-depth reviews of the existing thematic areas and cross-cutting issues under the Convention on Biological Diversity, items identified as priorities by the World Summit on Sustainable Development should be considered in relation to the existing programmes of work. It also decided that, for each upcoming meeting, appropriate ways to address — including within the ministerial segment — issues of overarching importance, in particular the relevant socio-economic issues identified by the Summit, should be identified.

11. The Conference adopted new programmes of work in the areas of mountain biological diversity, protected areas, and technology transfer and cooperation (decisions VII/27, VII/28 and VII/29), and revised and expanded the existing

programmes of work on inland water ecosystems, and marine and coastal biological diversity (decisions VII/4 and VII/5). In the new multi-year programme of work, island biodiversity will be an issue for in-depth consideration at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In this regard, the Executive Secretary was mandated to develop a preparatory process for the work of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on the issue, inter alia, drawing on the outcome the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 10 to 14 January 2005.

12. The programme of work on protected areas provides an important framework for the implementation of relevant commitments made at the World Summit and the output of the fifth World Parks Congress, convened by the World Conservation Union in September 2003. Its overall objective is the establishment and maintenance, by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas, of comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas.

13. In adopting the programme of work on technology transfer and cooperation, the Conference of the Parties sought to ensure that parties have, inter alia, the technological capacity to implement the Convention in line with the goals of the Strategic Plan and the commitments of Governments in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit. The programme of work provides for technology assessments; the development of national, regional and international systems for the gathering and dissemination of relevant information on technology transfer and cooperation; the establishment of an enabling administrative, legislative and policy environment; and the building or enhancement of technical, scientific, institutional and administrative capacity.

14. Pursuant to paragraph 44 (o) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit, subsequently reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 57/260 of 20 December 2002 and 58/212, the Conference of the Parties decided to mandate the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. It adopted broad terms of reference for the Working Group, thereby maintaining an important level of flexibility regarding the nature, scope and elements of the instrument or instruments to be developed. The Working Group will meet twice during the intersessional period between the seventh and eighth meetings of the Conference.

15. At its seventh meeting, the Conference also adopted guidelines on key issues: the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity; [5] the Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines for the Conduct of Cultural, Environmental and Social Impact Assessments regarding Developments Proposed to Take Place on, or which are Likely to Impact on, Sacred Sites and on Lands and Waters Traditionally Occupied or Used by Indigenous and Local Communities; [6] and the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.[7] Such guiding principles and guidelines represent international consensus on appropriate measures for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and provide useful guidance to parties regarding action at the national and regional levels.

16. Taken as a whole, the decisions adopted by the Conference at its seventh meeting underline the determination of parties to put in place concrete measures to

facilitate progress towards the achievement of the 2010 target and the realization of the three objectives of the Convention. They also reaffirm their commitment to the Convention's lead role in international biodiversity issues and its significant contributions to the global sustainable development agenda.

2. Outcome of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

17. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was attended by 895 participants from 79 parties, 76 non-party States and 158 organizations, including United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, industry and academia. The Meeting successfully met the double challenge of establishing an operational framework for the effective implementation of the Protocol and the processes required for the further development of some of its provisions.

18. Since effective and timely decision-making by parties of import is critical and central to the smooth operation of the Protocol, the Meeting established procedures and mechanisms designed to facilitate decision-making by parties of import, especially those encountering difficulties in the decision-making process. In decision BS-I/2, the Meeting emphasized that, in facilitating decision-making, priority should be given to the capacity-building of developing country parties and parties with economies in transition. It further underlined the need for cooperation among parties to ensure that they have access to the Biosafety Clearing House and the information it houses. In decision BS-I/3, on information-sharing and the Biosafety Clearing House, the Meeting defined the modalities of operation of the Biosafety Clearing House and encouraged parties, Governments and other users to develop national, regional, subregional and institutional nodes that are interlinked with the central portal.

19. With regard to handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms, the Meeting, by decision BS-I/6, adopted interim measures regarding documentation requirements for living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing, pending the adoption of detailed requirements at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, to be held in the first half of 2005. The Meeting established an open-ended expert group on identification requirements to assist it in taking a decision. As regards living modified organisms for contained use and for direct introduction into the environment, the Meeting specified the information requirements for accompanying documentation and recommended specific formats for such documentation.

20. The Meeting considered capacity-building for developing country parties and parties with economies in transition as a crucial element in the effective implementation of the Protocol. In this regard, it established a voluntary fund for the use of the roster of experts on biosafety; called for a coordinated approach towards capacity-building at all levels in order to develop possible synergies and promote partnerships among different capacity-building efforts and funding initiatives; and adopted the Action Plan for Building Capacities for Effective Implementation of the Protocol together with a set of indicators for monitoring its implementation (see decisions BS-I/4 and BS-I/5).

21. By decision BS-I/8, the Meeting adopted procedures and mechanisms to promote compliance with the provisions of the Protocol, to address cases of non-compliance by parties, and to provide advice or assistance to those parties having difficulties. In cases of non-compliance, a compliance committee is to take the necessary measures, taking into account the capacity of the party concerned to comply and such factors as the cause, type, degree and frequency of non-compliance. In addition, the Meeting established an open-ended ad hoc working group of experts to elaborate international rules and procedures regarding liability and redress for damage resulting from the transboundary movements of living modified organisms.

C. Outcomes of special interest to the General Assembly

22. The Conference of the Parties, at its seventh meeting, adopted a number of decisions of special interest to the Assembly. These decisions either address broader issues under consideration by the Assembly or require some action by the General Assembly or other organizations of the United Nations system.

1. 2010 biodiversity target and the Millennium Development Goals

23. The Conference noted that: the Millennium Development Goals provide the framework for the entire United Nations system to work coherently towards the tasks of combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women; the achievement of the Goals are dependent on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and if development activities were not undertaken in a manner consistent with the objectives of the Convention, they may further degrade biodiversity, undermine sustainability and hence limit achievement of the Goals. Thus, the Conference urged parties, Governments, international financial institutions, donors and relevant intergovernmental organizations, as a contribution towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, to implement development activities in ways that are consistent with and do not compromise the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2010 target.

24. In addition, the Conference requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To work closely with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Millennium Project of the Secretary-General and others to find ways to communicate more effectively the importance of biodiversity in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to identify and communicate the relationship between biodiversity and human development targets at all levels;

(b) To explore with the Secretary-General the possibility of establishing the 2010 target as an interim milestone in achieving Millennium Development Goal 7, of ensuring environmental sustainability by 2015;

(c) To find ways to use the 2010 targets and indicators[8] to help achieve target 9 (reverse the loss of environmental resources) of Millennium Development Goal 7 and the other relevant Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 1, of halving poverty and hunger, and those relating to health.

2. Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations

25. With regard to the issue of cooperation with other conventions and international organizations, the Conference, in its decision VII/26, welcomed the support of the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/212, for the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and the relevant subsidiary bodies of the Framework Convention, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

26. In this context, the Conference urged further enhanced cooperation with relevant international conventions, organizations and bodies, strengthening and building upon existing cooperative arrangements to enhance synergies and reduce inefficiencies, governance arrangements and agreed programmes, within existing resources. Specifically, it requested the Executive Secretary to invite the secretariats of the other four biodiversity-related conventions (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, more commonly known as the Ramsar Convention;[9] Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; and World Heritage Convention) to form a liaison group to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation.

27. The Conference also requested the Executive Secretary, in close collaboration with relevant conventions, organizations and bodies, to examine options for establishing a flexible framework among all relevant actors, such as a global partnership on biodiversity.

3. Oceans and the law of the sea

28. The elaborated programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity incorporates relevant activities from the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit. A number of paragraphs in Conference decision VII/5, which relate to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, including marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction and deep seabed genetic resources, are directly addressed to the General Assembly.

29. Recalling paragraphs 51 and 52 of Assembly resolution 58/240 of 23 December 2003, as well as paragraphs 32 (a) and (c) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit, the Conference expressed concern about the serious threats to the biological diversity in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, in particular areas with seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold-water corals, other vulnerable ecosystems and certain other underwater features, resulting from the processes and activities being carried out in such areas, and stressed the need for rapid action to address those threats on the basis of the precautionary approach and the ecosystem approach.

30. The Conference of the Parties called upon the Assembly and relevant international and regional organizations, in accordance with their mandate and rules of procedure, to take urgently the necessary short, medium and long-term measures to eliminate or avoid destructive practices, consistent with international law, on a scientific basis, including the application of precaution; for example, consideration on a case-by-case basis, of the interim prohibition of destructive practices adversely impacting upon the marine biological diversity associated with the areas identified

above. The Conference of the Parties also recommended Parties to take urgently the necessary responsive measures.

31. With regard to marine protected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the Conference, in the same decision, noted that these were extremely deficient in purpose, numbers and coverage and agreed on the urgent need for international cooperation and action to improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, including the establishment of further marine protected areas consistent with international law, and based on scientific information, including areas such as seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold-water corals and other vulnerable ecosystems.

32. Further, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to urgently collaborate with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and relevant international and regional bodies in accordance with their mandates and their rules of procedure on the preparation of the report called for in General Assembly resolution 58/240, paragraph 52, and to support any work of the Assembly in identifying appropriate mechanisms for the future establishment and effective management of marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction. Regarding the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction, the Conference welcomed Assembly resolution 58/240 and invited parties to raise their concerns regarding this issue at the Assembly's fifty-ninth session. It invited the Assembly to further coordinate work relating to conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

33. In addition, the Conference requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the International Seabed Authority and in collaboration with the international organizations, such as the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, if appropriate, to compile information on the methods for the identification, assessment and monitoring of genetic resources of the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and to compile and synthesize information on their status and trends, including identification of threats to such genetic resources and the technical options for their protection.

4. Island biodiversity

34. In accordance with the multi-year programme of work and as called for in the strategy paper adopted by the Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Nassau from 26 to 30 January 2004, the Conference of the Parties, by decision VII/31, decided to establish a new programme of work on island biodiversity.

35. The above underscores the need for General Assembly support to the work of the Convention in specific areas through policy follow-up to facilitate enhanced coordination and cooperative arrangements and to develop synergies and complementarities. It also underlines the role of the Convention and its Protocol on Biosafety as key instruments in addressing issues of concern to the Assembly.

D. Conclusions and recommendations

36. The General Assembly, at its fifty-ninth session, may wish to, inter alia:

(a) Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

(b) Note the outcome of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the shift from policy development to implementation;

(c) Also note the outcome of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol;

(d) Welcome the offer of the Government of Brazil to host both the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the third meeting of Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in the first half of 2006;

(e) Urge parties to the Convention that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Protocol to do so as soon as possible;

(f) Note the interdependence of the 2010 target in the Strategic Plan of the Convention and the Millennium Development Goals, and the relevance of the biodiversity indicators adopted by the Conference at its seventh meeting for target 9 (reverse the loss of environmental resources) of Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensure environmental sustainability);

(g) Urge parties to the Convention and other Governments to take the necessary measures to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to benefit all life on earth;

(h) Consider any further action needed with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, including marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction and deep seabed genetic resources;

(i) Welcome the steps taken by the Convention on Biological Diversity to promote closer collaboration with other conventions and international organizations;

(j) Invite the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue to report to the Assembly on the ongoing work regarding the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[2] See UNEP/CBD/ExCOP/1/3 and Corr.1, part two, annex.

[3] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[4] UNEP/CBD/COP/6/20, annex I, decision VI/26.

[5] Conference decision VII/12, annex II.

[6] Conference decision VII/16, annex.

[7] Conference decision VII/14, annex.

[8] In Conference decision VII/30, Goals, sub-targets and indicators are identified for each of the focal areas referred to in paragraph 7 of the present report. The indicators for immediate testing are: trends in extent of selected biomes, ecosystems and habitats; trends in abundance and distribution of selected species; coverage of protected areas; nitrogen deposition; marine trophic index; water quality in aquatic ecosystems; status and trends of linguistic diversity and numbers of speakers of indigenous languages; official development assistance provided in support of the Convention. Other indicators are under development.

[9] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 996, No. 14583.

IV. Cooperative and joint activities of the conventions

A. Introduction

1. The conferences of the parties to the three conventions discussed in the present report and their subsidiary bodies have, over the years, underlined the need for cooperation and the development and enhancement of synergies and complementarities among the conventions at international, national and local levels.[1] The rationale for collaboration among the conventions stems from the interlinkages among the issues that they address.[2]

2. To facilitate coordination among the conventions, a Joint Liaison Group has been established, comprising the executive secretaries and the chairs of the subsidiary bodies of each of the conventions.

3. The General Assembly further encouraged this cooperation and, by resolution 57/260 of 20 December 2002 and 58/212 of 23 December 2003, welcomed the establishment of the Group and took note of its ongoing work.

4. The Joint Liaison Group held its fifth meeting in January 2004 and: (a) reviewed the progress made in cooperative and joint activities and (b) agreed to prepare a joint paper on options for enhanced cooperation, which would be presented to the relevant bodies of each of the conventions. These issues are addressed in sections B and C below.

B. Recent cooperative activities of the secretariats of the three conventions

5. The secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in cooperation with other convention secretariats, organized a workshop in Espoo, Finland, in July 2003, with the aim of enhancing collaboration and of examining synergy among the conventions. Participants included national focal points of all three conventions. The workshop identified a number of options for cooperation in the exchange of information, of transfer of technology, education and outreach, research and systematic observation, capacity-building, reporting, and climate change impacts and adaptation. The workshop highlighted a number of other options, for example, the use of the ecosystem approach as a framework for activities contributing to the objectives of the three conventions.[3]

6. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, together with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and in collaboration with the secretariat of the Framework Convention, organized a workshop in Viterbo, Italy, in April 2004 on promoting synergy among the three conventions in regard to forests and forest ecosystems. In addition, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification, is planning to convene a workshop on practicing synergy, for national focal points of the relevant conventions and Global Environment Facility from Africa, and has invited the secretariat of the Framework Convention to participate actively in the planning process.

7. A joint programme of work has been developed by the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands. The programme highlights specific areas of collaboration and joint action among the respective secretariats, national focal points and other collaborating partners. This development was welcomed by the conferences of the parties to both conventions.[4]

8. A report entitled *Interlinkages Between Biological Diversity and Climate Change: Advice on the Integration of Biodiversity Considerations into the Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol*[5] was prepared by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Framework Convention and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The report was welcomed by the scientific subsidiary bodies of the two conventions. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention encouraged parties to the Convention to make use of the report for national purposes.

9. The secretariats are developing common web-based tools to facilitate access to national reports and communications for the three conventions and to information on national focal points. The three secretariats also maintain a joint web-calendar of activities relevant to the three conventions and are developing a joint photographic calendar for 2005, as well as a brochure on the three conventions.

10. On the margins of the fifth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group, a retreat with the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer and senior staff of the Global Environment Facility was held to discuss common issues in relation to adaptation to climate change, the transfer of technology, and capacity-building and development.

11. The three executive secretaries have written jointly to the Chair of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to express their appreciation for the work done so far on the "Rio markers"[6] and to request the integration of the markers in the regular creditor reporting system in order to facilitate the identification of official development assistance funding allocated to the implementation of each of the conventions.

12. The secretariats are also sharing information and providing input to the Group on Earth Observations.

C. Promoting further enhanced collaboration among the conventions

13. The Conference of the Parties and/or the respective subsidiary bodies of each convention called upon the Joint Liaison Group to explore options for further cooperation among the three conventions.[7]

14. The Conference of the Parties and the subsidiary bodies of each of the conventions have also provided guidance that promotes complementarity among the national biodiversity strategies and action plans, the national action programmes of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the national communications and national adaptation programmes of action of the Framework Convention,[8] and collaboration among the scientific subsidiary bodies[9] and the respective national focal points.[10]

15. These modalities and other options for enhanced cooperation will be addressed in the options paper to be prepared by the three secretariats, as suggested by the Joint Liaison Group in line with the decisions of the respective conferences of the parties and their subsidiary bodies. The options will be presented to the relevant convention bodies for their consideration.

Notes

[1] Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decision VI/20; Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decision 13/CP.8; Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification decision 12/COP.6. In the case of the latter Convention, encouragement of coordination of activities among the three conventions is built into the text of the Convention itself (art. 8.1).

[2] A number of studies have highlighted the potential for synergy among the conventions, for example: interlinkage studies of the World Bank (see *Protecting Our Planet — Securing Our Future: Linkages among Global Environmental Issues and Human Needs*, Robert T. Watson et al., 1998); United Nations University, *Interlinkages: Synergies and Coordination between Multilateral Environmental Agreements*, Report of the International Conference, Tokyo 14-16 July 1999); United Nations Development Programme, "Report of the Expert Meeting on Synergies among the Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Combating Desertification and the Forest Principles, Sede Boqer, Israel, 17-20 March 1997"; and Global Environment Facility, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, "Interlinkages between the GEF focal areas: a report focusing on the needs of the GEF", 2004.

[3] The report of the workshop is contained in FCCC/SB/2003/1.

[4] Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification decision 12/COP.6 and Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decision VII/2.

[5] Convention on Biological Diversity, Technical Series No. 10, 2003.

[6] The "Rio markers" developed by the Development Assistance Committee permit the specific identification of activities targeting the objectives of the Rio conventions which, to a large extent, fall under the definition of aid to environment.

[7] FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2, para. 42 (d); FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15, para. 44 (e); Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decision VII/15; and Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification decision 12/COP.6.

[8] Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decision 28/CP.7, annex, "Guidelines for the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action" (see FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.4); and Convention on Biological Diversity, Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice recommendation VIII/4.

[9] Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decision 13/CP.8, para. 2 (see FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1).

[10] See FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15, para. 44 (d), and para. 3 of decision VII/15 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (see UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21).